

An

Essay on

THE DUTIES OF THE

ACCOUCHEUR

*Respectfully submitted to the Faculty
of the*

Homœopathic Medical College of Penna

for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

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Philadelphia Feb'y 1st. 1868.

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Well has some one said
 that the "Art of medicine is
 at once sublime and really
 divine". In no profes-
 sion will more opportu-
 nities arise for the
 exercise of the higher and
 holier sentiments than
 in this.

To stand guard over
 the health of the com-
 munity in which he
 is located - giving notice
 of the approach of the

enemy against whom
he has enlisted to wage
perpetual war.—

One ^{can} make known the
best means of escape—
or himself to manfully
battle against its in-
sidious, or overt attacks,
will sufficiently familiar-
ize the discriminating
physician with the
different types of char-
acter— their beauties and
their deformities— their

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wants and their ca-
pacities - and will im-
press upon him the
two great lessons of
prudence and charity.

His duties will consist
in preventing or mitiga-
ting pain, promoting
~~usefulness~~ - staying the
hand of death - or when
this is beyond his power,
in gently communicating
the tidings of approaching
dissolution.

But the general practitioner has special duties to perform - while his general duty may be to help people out of the world - he has another, more pleasant, but sometimes quite as embarrassing work to do in helping them into it; and it is this subject that I propose to treat in this essay.

The Obstetrician should

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bear in mind when
called to preside over
the process which is to
add another "responsi-
bility" to the world - and
to himself at that time
in particular, that he
has not to do with
ordinary disease, and
indeed very probably
he will find nothing
that may be called dis-
ease, or that requires the
prescription of medicine

at all, or to intrude
artificial assistance of
any kind, but, that he
is summoned to witness
a natural function
of the female system,
for which, in ordinary
cases, nature has made
as ample provision,
as for the perform-
ance of other natural
phenomena; and it
is particularly impor-
tant that, by our con-

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versation and deport-
ment we impress
this fact upon the
mind of our patient
and her friends; but
as in other functions
nature sometimes
fails, and it becomes
necessary to assist
her, so likewise she
fails in performing
the beautiful func-
tion of parturition
regularly and requires

to be assisted by art.

And in the exercise
of proper judgment in
discriminating in this
regard perhaps more
than in any other res-
ides the difference in
the relative success of
different practitioners
of the obstetrical art.

It is at this point es-
pecially that the Hom-
oeopathic accoucheur,
when he reflects how

great his advantages
 are over those "who having
 eyes, see not and having
 ears, hear not" the great
truths discovered to
 the world by the im-
 mortal Hahnemann,
 he feels ready to exclaim
 as did that remark-
 able man of science
 (Archimedes) eureka!
 eureka! —

It is not necessary, nor
 even advisable during

the first stage of labor, for
the accoucheur to remain
in the room with the
patient, or even in the
house, if the progress is
slow; but he should be
very careful before leav-
ing her, to satisfy him-
self that all is right, and
that every thing is in
readiness for the expected
délivrement; and it would
be well to give some
general directions to

the nurse.

In regard to confining the patient - I think the most rational and natural course to pursue is, to allow her during the first stage of labor (especially if it commence in the day time) to get up, walk about the apartment, sit in a chair, rest on the sofa when tired, or pursue some light

occupation if she be able to do so.

Much depends upon keeping her tranquil and cheerful; and it is important that she should be told of all that is favorable in her case, and all subjects calculated to depress her spirits should be carefully avoided.

In this matter very much depends upon

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the female attendants,
who should receive
proper instructions
and cautions.

I am fully satis-
fied that in most,
if not in all cases
and here I will add,
that it is not confined
to obstetrics alone but
I believe the rule
will apply in almost
all cases which come
under his professional

care from whatever cause) it is best to deal frankly and honestly with our patients and not encourage false hopes under the mistaken view of thereby benefiting them.

If it be a primitive and the case is simply tedious, let her be so informed, and that, as far as we can

judge, the labor will
 terminate safely to
 herself and child, and
 she will bear to bear
 that she has yet some
 time to suffer, and
 that she will have
 a fine opportunity
 to exercise the virtue
 which Job so pre-
 eminently displayed
 There is ~~no~~ ^{and} think
 but very little for the
 physician to do if the

case be one of purely
natural labor, and
the attendant circum-
stances favorable.

Much judgment
and caution are re-
quired in our inter-
ference, or we shall
convert the most sim-
ple case into a labor-
ious or even danger-
ous one. To conduct
labor with safety, it is
necessary that the

practitioner should be
 acquainted with every
 phenomena; if he is
 not, he will not know
 when certain of them
 are wanting, or when
 others are in excess; he
 cannot estimate the
 relative importance
 of each; the force and
 effect of the pains,
 the necessity of pre-
 serving or rupturing
 the membranes; the

degree of resistance which the os uteri, or external parts may offer; he will be unable to ascertain precisely the presentation, or know the best method of correcting any error in the same; or the proper time to do it.

And above all he should be able to pursue a firm, candid, but feeling conduct - that, on the one

hand, he may not be betrayed into the indiscretion of premature interference, nor, on the other, on account of indecision, to permit the right time to pass when manual, or instrumental assistance should be employed; thus perhaps allowing complications to occur which will retard or increase the severity of the labor.

or endanger the life
of the mother, or child,
or may be both.

It is always well
when we are called to
see a patient sup-
posed to be in labor, to
obey the summons as
soon as possible; the
reasons for doing so
are, first, our prompt-
ness will give the
patient a favorable
opinion of our interest

in her welfare, and,
 Sec. it will give us
 the earliest opportunity
 to rectify any malpo-
 sition, or remedy un-
 pleasant complications
 that are liable to be met
 with in any given
 case.